

HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

194 Putnam Pike
Glocester, R.I. 02814

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, September 15, 2016.**

Present: Moderator – Raymond Fogarty, Jr.; Chief Stuart Pearson;
Treasurer – Sandra Owens; Tax Collector/Clerk – Kimberly Barber;
Board Members – George Kain, James Richards,
Louise Michaels and David Mahoney;
HFD and Improvement Association Representative – William Vota;
Attorney – Fred Mason, Jr.

Absent: none

Audience: Taxpayers – David LaPlante and George Warren

I. – Meeting Called to Order:

The meeting was called to order at **7:05 pm** by Moderator Fogarty.

II. – Approval of the minutes from the May 19th meeting:

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the May 19th meeting. If there are no corrections, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

Louise made a motion to accept the minutes. George seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. – Review of Bills:

A check register of bills to be paid was provided to all board members in their folder. Moderator Fogarty asked if there were any comments or questions on these expenses. There were none expressed. The Moderator clarified that this is an informational report only and no vote is necessary.

IV. – Treasurer's Report:

Beginning balance May 1st \$278,991.40 and ending balance May 31st \$259,255.71.

Beginning balance June 1st \$259,255.71 and ending balance June 30th \$223,720.43. On page 3 it shows that we had \$137,818 left in general funds and in the salary contingency fund \$9,839 and in restricted funds \$76,162. At the end of June we had collected \$598,395.77 in revenue and had \$603,184.86 in expenses. We also paid out \$43,526.80 in capital expenditures for year 2015/1.6 That is how we ended the year. These figures will be confirmed by the Auditor who is working on the audit now. It should be done sometime in December, because we do have to turn reports in to the state by December 31st. Some discussion followed regarding the audit process.

Beginning balance July 1st \$223,720.43 and ending balance July 31st \$158,707.16. There was very little tax revenue this month, prior to the August 1st tax bills being mailed out. However the third party revenue was healthy. There was some discussion about the third party revenue.

Sandy continued saying that you'll notice a large expenditure on page 2 G/L #60205 due to the fact that ½ of the call pay was paid out on July 1st. The second ½ will be paid out on December 1st. Personnel expenses for fringe benefits were also paid out this month. You'll also notice on page 3 that a new bank account has been opened at Navigant Credit Union. We will be closing the accounts at Citizens Bank due to the fact that they have started charging us outrageous monthly service charges and will not work with us.

The Moderator thanked Sandy and Kim for all of their hard work on closing the books for the year.

Louise made a motion to accept the May, June and July Treasurer's reports as presented. Jim seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

V. – Tax Collector's Report:

The 2016 Tax Levy was \$525,108.37 and an ad was placed in the Bargain Buyer notifying tax payers that the bills had been mailed, as required by our By-Laws. The taxes receivable balance as of today's date is \$219,958.36. Ray asked what the tax levy was last year in comparison? Kim said last year it was \$465,457, so it increased approximately \$60,000.

Tax collected in May totaled \$6,337.86, June \$13,744.87, July \$5,390.63 and August \$271,012.84.

Third Party billing collected in the month of May totaled \$10,361.46, June \$3,107.46, July \$15,895.39 and August \$10,361.13.

Mr. Warren asked what exactly is third party billing? The Chief replied saying that third party billing is when we do a rescue call we are allowed to bill the patient's insurance. Further discussion followed about the third party billing process. The board members clarified that Harmony taxpayers pay nothing out of pocket for our rescue service, but their insurance companies will be billed.

Jim made a motion to accept the Tax Collector's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. – Chief's Report:

Since our last meeting we have received 5 grants totaling \$8,282.50.

We still have 2 outstanding grant applications:

Regional SAFER Grant for Recruitment and Retention for 1 million +
SHSP Grant for SCBA's for \$40,980

A denial letter was received for 2015 AFG which would have been used to purchase a LUCAS unit and LDH [Large Diameter Hose]. The Chief did recently attend an AFG workshop hosted by Senator Reed and he will be resubmitting for these items with the 2016 AFG application due in November.

Events Attended:

Harmony Fire District Banquet – Thank you to the District Board for throwing this event for everyone. We all had a great time.

Sunday September 11th Father Varghese at St. Eugene's Church organized a 15th Anniversary service for 9/11. It was attended by the Chief and his wife Ruth, Captain Waterman,

Mike Sears, Andrew Lema, Ian Coupe and our Per/Diem crew.
Ponaganset High School Scholarship Awards Night – Chief Pearson presented the Gloucester Firefighter Scholarships this year. 3 were awarded ranging from \$500 to \$2,000.
The Chief attended the IAFC Conference in San Antonio, TX August 17th – 20th. At that time he was able to talk to vendor and manufacturers of a few different things that he is having difficulty with. By being able to speak to them directly he is confident that he will now have a swift resolution to his issues. He also spoke with the vendor who carries the LUCAS device and they are willing to assist us with the next AFG application for this item.

***Pictures from most of these events were posted on our Facebook page.

On June 23rd we did a Photo Shoot with Foster Grant – Participating were the Deputy Chief, Ken Lewis, Capt Waterman, Danielle Fiori, Joe Webster, Mike Chapkounian and Ian Coupe.

WEEI Radio has been broadcasting the RIAFC recruitment ad featuring our own Pvt. Danielle Fiori.

The Gloucester Town Clerk has asked each Fire District to send a representative, ours is the Chief, to participate in creating a Town-wide policy for issuing Permits for Special Events. Some discussion followed about Special Events.

Crew Update:

Private Mike Grenga is out with a broken collar bone. He's doing well and should be returning to active duty in mid-October. The Moderator asked if that happened here and the Chief clarified that this was not a work related injury.

Training Update:

- Working on implementing the newly released RI Protocol updates.
- 2 members registered to attend a Firefighter I class.
- 2 members will be attending an EMT class that will held in house.
- Also earlier this week the Chief also completed an 800 MHz operator training.

George made a motion to accept the Chief's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. – Harmony Fire Department and Improvement Association Report:

Lt. Willy Vota then gave the Association's report.

He said the Gloucester Firefighters are doing the Steak Fry again. This year it will be on October 1st and tickets are \$15. He has some and they will be for sale at the door. He then presented a letter to the Moderator from the Gloucester Firefighters Steak Fry Committee. He said the letter was asking permission to use the station again and that it was given to him last night. Ray opened the letter and read it aloud to the board. He asked if anyone had a problem with them using the station? If not, he would like to call for a motion.

George made a motion to grant the Gloucester Firefighters Steak Fry Committee use of the station on September 30th and October 1st. Louise seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Jim asked Willy about the Oakland-Mapleville Muster. Did we participate this year? Willy said that he wasn't able to go this year so he honestly didn't know. But he believes they did bring the Squad down. The Chief said that he did attend, along with Lt. Detri and some other members. They did bring the Squad down and it won a trophy again for being the newest apparatus there. We didn't have a muster team participate this year though.

Kim asked Willy if any of the members had expressed any interest in helping out with the Tree Lighting this year. He said that he has heard a couple of people say they want to help out. But like with the Steak Fry, he put it up on the board and he had 2 people sign up. The Chief said that the Association did approve \$1,500 for the Tree Lighting at their meeting the other night. As the board is award though with the donations that Kim goes out and gets the cost does end up being much less. He did agree with Willy saying that there had been much interest amongst the crew the other night about their taking part in the event and even their wives helping out. The Chief said that we are all hoping that Jim is going to do the cotton candy again this year too. Jim said now wait a minute let me think about that, do we have a hazmat suit? Everyone laughed. The Moderator asked the date for the event. Louise replied that it is always the Sunday after Thanksgiving, so November 27th, and it's from 4-6:00.

Jim made a motion to accept the Association's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. – Committee Reports:

- a. Property Review Work Team – George Kain and Louise Michaels, Co-Chairs
George said that this project is still on hold. The Moderator then explained to the audience what this project had been about.
- b. Meeting of 3 Fire Districts – Chief Pearson and George Kain, Representatives
George reported that they hadn't had a meeting in a while. He asked if the Chief had an update on the status of the new tower on Willy Woodhead Road? The Chief said that the tower is under construction. He also stated that the entire project would not be accepted as complete and signed off on until the tower was finished and the entire system could be tested before the leaves fly.

Jim made a motion to accept the Committee reports. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

IX. – Old Business:

- a. Living Space Renovation – Deputy Chief Muto, Clerk of the Works
The Chief reported on the project since the Deputy was away on vacation in Italy. He stated that the renovation of the living space is now complete. The total cost came to \$5,282.22. The room meets all requirements of the RI State Fire Code. The remainder of the funds in the restricted account will now be used to remodel the men's room. That project will start next Wednesday. The painting will be done in-house, just as the painting and A/C install upstairs had been done in-house as well by himself and crew members.

Louise asked why the living space project had gone over the quoted price? The Chief said that an access door had to be installed in the ceiling to access an electrical panel. This wasn't discovered until the ceiling was taken down, so it was an additional expense.

b. Sale of Reserve Rescue –

Jim placed an ad to sell the truck on *Firetruckmall.com* with an asking price of \$19,000 at that company's recommendation. He thinks it's a high price, but we can let it sit there for a little while to see what happens. He has received 1 inquiry, but it hasn't gone anywhere.

George said he had two comments on that. First of all, he thought we had agreed to hold off on advertising until we had a written agreement from up the street stating that we could use that rescue. Right now we have a verbal, but we have no written commitment on that truck. Discussion followed about the use of loaner rescues. Secondly George asked Jim why we hadn't listed the truck on *MuniciBid*, that is what the town uses successfully. Jim said that it could be listed anywhere. George said he thought that the decision of where to list the truck should have come before the board. The Moderator asked that the Chief contact Chepachet Fire District and request a decision in writing on the sale of the Reserve Rescue. Dave was reviewing the prior meetings minutes and found that they did refer to a letter. Kim had the letter in her folder and presented to the Chief for his review. Further discussion followed.

Kim read aloud the motion made at the May 19th meeting, "Ray made a motion to sell the vehicle based on Chepachet still conferring with dissolving the agreement and splitting the money. The motion was seconded by Jim and it was opposed by George. Ray voted to sell and the motion carried. The board asked the Chief to inform Chepachet Fire District that it is our intent to sell the current Reserve Rescue and the asking price will be \$6,000." Further discussion followed.

X. – New Business:

Annual Presentation of Officers & Crew Roster Listings –

The Chief submitted his Crew and Officer Appointment Recommendations report to the board members for their review. The report was passed around the table. The Moderator asked if there were any questions or comments about the Chiefs report. There were none.

George made a motion to accept the Chiefs recommendations as submitted. Jim seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The Moderator will sign off on the report and it will be posted by the clerk.

Dave stated he wanted to discuss station coverage and the report that the Deputy Chief had created some time ago on the subject. Kim stated that this report had originally been presented during Executive Session as a matter of personnel. They deferred to Attorney Mason for his opinion. After reviewing it, he said he did not feel it would be an issue. Dave then continued stating that as we all know volunteerism is an issue across the country, there are a lot of requirements, we're getting busier. He was just wondering what the boards opinion is, to start looking at being progressive in the sense of that we're going to be faced with having to put more staff on in the future, whether it be a year or 2 years away. Discussion followed regarding call volume and projections for the future. George suggested adding a per/diem shift on Friday and Saturday nights and letting the volunteers sign up for the other nights.

Mr. LaPlante said that is also his concern for the fire service and where it's going. Because at some point the volunteers are going to disappear. So based on what he's [Dave] talking about, that report he has, what would increasing taxes \$100,000 mean to the average taxpayer? Kim said well increasing it \$60,000 brought it up 12%. So you would have to double that, so it would be a 24% increase in one year. Further discussion followed. The Chief talked about the Regional Recruitment & Retention AFG that he submitted and how it could help us with these issues. Mr. LaPlante felt that this issue was bigger than the Harmony Fire District and it was necessary for the 3 fire districts to come together and address it. He added that this needs to be done soon because the problem is snowballing and we don't want to wait until the state passes down mandates and forces us to do things their way. More discussion followed. No one on the board disputed that there was a need, but they did not have a solution as to where the money to pay for it would come from. The board asked to have "Station Coverage" added to the Agenda under "Old Business" for next month's meeting.

XI. – Public Input:

Mr. Warren expressed an interest in working on a committee for the district's budget. He felt the budget could be tightened up. The Moderator welcomed his participation and said he would be contacted when that committee was formed in the spring. Some further discussion followed regarding the bid process and budgeting.

XII. – Executive Session:

Louise made a motion to go into Executive Session regarding matters of personnel, pursuant to *RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1)*. George seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board recessed for Executive Session at 8:29 pm.

A motion was made by Louise to reconvene the regular meeting at 8:48 pm. The motion was seconded by George. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was then made by Louise to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. Jim seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Moderator stated that no votes had been taken while in Executive Session.

XIII. – Adjournment:

Louise made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The September meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **8:50 pm**.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board
is scheduled for **Thursday, October 27, 2016, 7:00 pm**, at the Harmony Fire Station.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector/Clerk